DreamSpeak
An Interview With Beverly D'Urso:
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Questions by Robert Waggoner

Beverly D'Urso (formerly Beverly Kedzierski, and also Bev Heart) is an incredible lucid dreamer. She served as Stephen LaBerge's main lucid dream research subject in the early years of his research work, and helped provide key insights into lucid dreaming. Interviewed by magazines, national and local television, and other media, Beverly has promoted a greater understanding of lucid dreaming and "lucid living." The LDE is pleased to provide a multi-issue interview of this fascinating lucid dreamer.

Robert: Beverly, thanks for doing an interview with the LDE. Since you play a pivotal part in the development of lucid dreaming, tell us how your interest in dreaming began.

Beverly: I grew up in a small suburb of Chicago, the only child of a lower-middle class family. I was very close to my parents. When I was about five years old, my grandfather came to live with us. It was around this time that I remember having a series of recurring nightmares.

I imagined gruesome witches living in the back of my dark and scary closet. In my dreams, I'd be quietly playing or lying in bed. Without notice, the witches would sneak out and come after me. I'd scream and run through the house, making it to the back porch and sometimes down the back stairs, but never any further. I'd fall on the cement at the bottom of the stairs, spread eagle on my back, and just as they were about to devour me, I'd wake up. In an icy sweat, breathing fast, I'd be terrified of going to sleep again. For a few weeks, the witches would leave me alone, but, when I least expected it, they'd be back. After years of this same recurring dream, I'd find myself pleading, as I lie on the cement with the witches hovering over me, "Please, spare me tonight. You can have me in tomorrow's night's dream!" At that point, they'd stop their attack and I'd wake up. However, the dream was still very upsetting, and I always hated going to sleep. I would lie in bed and tell myself that the witches only came in my dreams, while I was safe in bed. I tried to get myself to remember this the next time they appeared.

Robert: So, recurring nightmares led you to realize that witches only came in dreams. When did you consciously realize this in the dream state and become lucid?

Beverly: One hot, sticky summer night, when I was seven, I was especially afraid of going to sleep. I was sure the witches would appear in my dreams that night. My mom was sleeping on the living room couch, which she often did when it was so hot. The front door was opened to create a breeze. So, still being awake about two in the morning, I grabbed an old, dark pink, American Indian blanket. I put the blanket on the floor next to the couch to be close to my mom, and I fell asleep.

Soon, I found myself back in my bedroom, unknowingly in a dream, and noticed the closet door creaking open. I knew at once it was the witches, and I began to run for my life. I barely made it through the kitchen. As I raced across the porch and down the stairs, I tripped as usual and immediately those horrifying witches caught up to me. The instant before I started to plead with them, the thought flashed through my mind, "If I ask them to take me in tomorrow night's dream, then this must be a dream!" Instantly, my fear dissolved. I looked the witches straight in the eye and said, "What do you want?" They gave me a disgusting look, but I knew I was safe in a dream, and I continued, "Take me now. Let's get this over with!" I watched with amazement, as they quickly disappeared into the night. I woke up on the floor next to my mom feeling elated. I knew they were gone. I never had the witch nightmare in this form again! I would later have new episodes with the witches in my dreams and discover similar witch scenarios in my waking life.

Robert: Did that initial lucid dream realization change your outlook on dreaming? How so?

Beverly: My dreams were really fun after that night. Remembering the feeling of facing the witches, I learned to recognize when I was asleep and dreaming. Safe in the dream, I would do things I'd never do when awake! Being a very obedient student during the daytime, I would dream of being in class jumping wildly and carefree all over the tops of the school desks. Whatever I desired, was possible. Whatever I thought, would occur. I felt ecstatic. I could face other fears, heal or nurture myself emotionally, resolve conflicts or blocks, have adventures, help others, or just have fun. I could fly, visit places, people, or time periods, and generally "do the impossible!"

I made up ways to wake myself up from dreams, such as staring at bright streetlights in the dream, whenever I wanted to end a dream. Oftentimes, I would lay in bed imagining myself doing backward summersaults and float right into my dream, without ever losing consciousness, as I fell asleep. I figured out how to stay in a dream, if I felt I was waking up, how to change the dream scene, and even how to repeat the same dream!

Robert: What other things did you learn to do in your early lucid dreaming?

Beverly: I learned to fly in my dreams, as well. Usually, I would be lucid. I started out flying like a little bird, having to flap my wings to stay up. This could take much effort. As I grew up, I discovered that I could fly like superman, soaring effortlessly through the air, arms first. At some point, I must have hit some telephone wires or some other barrier because I fell. I soon realized that because it was my dream, I could fly right through physical objects of any kind. I had fun flying through walls and even deep into the earth.

As I matured in my lucid dreaming skills, I could eliminate flying by merely imagining that where I wanted to go was right behind me. This soon got boring, and I went back to flying for the simple pleasure it brought me. However, lately, I have been doing what I call "surrender flying.'" I lean back, and I let an invisible force pull me upwards from my heart area. This is a very ecstatic sensation, and it often leads me to places of great peace and power, which remain with me even after I wake up.

Robert: My earliest lucid awareness came when I was 10 or 11 years old, and saw dinosaurs in the public library in my dream and announced that this must be a dream. Besides the witches, what else helped you realize that you were dreaming?

Beverly: Often, in dreams, I would often find myself in front of my childhood home. At times, there were changes to the structure of the house. Other times the house changed in impossible ways. Sometimes, people other than my parents were living there. In the dream, I'd often get confused and scared. However, the more I thought about it while awake, the more I realized that I only saw the house this way when I was in a dream. So, I told myself, the next time I'm in front of my childhood home, I will check for these changes. If I see them, I will know that I am dreaming. From then on, seeing my childhood home was often a clue for me to become lucid in my dreams. Once I became lucid in this manner, I could pursue any other goals that I might have for that night.

Robert: What I find amazing is that you were so young. Did your lucid dreaming make you feel unusual, or did you feel special?

Beverly: My lucid dreaming experiences continued throughout my teenage years. However, I never knew the term "lucid dreaming." I thought that everyone dreamed this way every night. I guess I liked the experiences, so I thought about them at night, in bed, before I went to sleep. I suspected that I was dreaming whenever I would have problems in a dream, for example, when all my teeth would start to fall out, when my contacts would grow or multiply, or when I would find myself on shooting elevators or on bridges that were too steep to drive on.

I often dreamed of my close friend from high school, named Denise, She died in a car accident, when I was nineteen. At first, I'd see her, and we would continue as we would have when she was still alive. One time, I remembered that she had died. It scared me so much that I woke up. Afterwards, I learned to stay in the dream and talk to her. It took me time to get accustomed to hearing her voice, but I was finally able to ask her questions, and, eventually, listen to her answers. I felt very relieved to connect with her this way. It helped me deal more easily with my father in my dreams after he died, in 1992. By then, I was an expert!

Robert: What other types of lucid dream experiences surprised you back then?

Beverly: I would sometimes end a dream, think I woke up, yet find myself in another dream. These are called "false awakenings." Sometimes, I would 'wake up' ten or twenty times in a row, but usually the time it took me to realize that I was still dreaming

shortened exponentially. For example, I would realize I was still dreaming when I left the house for the day in a dream. The next time, in a similar dream, I would recognize I was still dreaming earlier, when I was in the shower, and so on. Finally, I would still be in bed, waking up, when I'd realize I was still in a dream. I have gotten better at recognizing false awakenings through the years.

Robert: So how did it happen that you met Stephen LaBerge?

Beverly: In the late 1970s, I moved to California to finish my graduate work in computer science at Stanford University. Soon after I arrived, I went to see a dream expert to find out if I could learn to dream less often. I thought that waking up too often with dreams was disturbing my sleep. The expert asked me to describe some of my common dreams. When I did, she told me that my dreams were called "lucid dreams." She said lucid dreaming was a valuable skill that people were trying to learn. I was very surprised! I only saw her once, but many years later she showed up at a presentation I was giving on my lucid dreaming experiences. I decided that if I were going to remember so many dreams anyway, at least many of them were lucid!

At the time, I was finishing a master's project with a Stanford Cognitive Psychology professor. I told one of his other students that I was a lucid dreamer. He said that I had to meet his friend Stephen LaBerge, who was doing his dissertation on this exact subject.

After Stephen and I were introduced at an initial meeting, we discovered that we both did similar things in our lucid dreams. He asked me to try some things at home and report back to him. When he asked me to try spinning in a dream and see what happened, I already knew the answer. My somersault dreams were like spinning backwards. I used them to get into new dream scenes. Steven also found that spinning in his dreams created new scenes, as well. He attributed it to something in the inner ear that affected a certain part of the brain.

Robert: Obviously you both shared similar interests in lucid awareness. Did that lead to being a research subject?

Beverly: Stephen invited me to participate in some experiments at the Stanford Sleep Laboratory. I ended up sleeping at the lab and doing experiments about once a month for many years. I also did many experiments for publicity, such as television or magazine specials. I succeeded every time I was in the lab, except one time early on when the technical equipment failed.

Before I came along, Stephen had used himself as the subject to show that one could be definitely in the sleeping state and signal the beginning of a predetermined task from a dream. He wondered how what we dream in our mind affects our physical body. For example, if we dream that we breathe slowly, does our physical breathing slow down? Although we can not, for example, cause our hearts to stop beating in a dream, in general, the activity of our dream bodies can be recognized as happening in our physical bodies, as well.

Robert: So how did the research begin with you as the subject?

Beverly: In the lab, I would signal from a dream, and my signals would be picked up by EEG machines in the lab via electrodes on my body. During this process, my brain waves, and other body functions, were also being monitored. They showed that I was unequivocally in the sleep state, particularly REM sleep, while I was signaling.

The first time Stephen signaled in the lab, he squeezed his arm muscles in Morse code for his initials. When I tried squeezing my arm muscles in an experiment, the signal was not strong enough to register, so we decided on using a new signal. We used eye movements, because eye movement is not as inhibited as other body movements during sleep. I would move my dream eyes back and forth in the dream and the left-right movements, from my physical eyes in bed, connected to electrodes, would appear in the lab on the polygraph machine. I used a double left-right left-right movement to show that I knew I was dreaming. I would use a similar movement to signal that I was about to begin a task in a dream. I eventually decided to use to series of these, or four left-right signals, to say that I was waking up, or about to wake myself up.

Robert: What other lucid dream research did you do in those early years?

Beverly: After I demonstrated that I could have lucid dreams at will, every time I was in the laboratory, I did many other experiments that used the signals. After signaling that I knew I was dreaming and in a dream, I would signal that I was about to begin a predetermined task. One time, we decided I would sing a song, which should have activated a certain area of my brain, which was also being monitored by electrodes. It did. Another time, I did a more mathematical task of counting from one to ten, which should have activated a different area of my brain, just as it would while awake. The experiments showed that the same parts of the brain were activated while dreaming a task, as when doing it while awake.

Robert: Did you ever have problems as a lucid dreamer on these research nights?

Beverly: One time, I was in the lab doing an experiment for ***Smithsonian Magazine***. My task was to get lucid, and then clap my dream hands to determine if an electrode on my physical ear would register the dream sound. In the dream, I signaled lucidity, but I couldn't clap my hands. A buoyancy compensatory had unexpectedly expanded around me, and I couldn't get both hands to meet. I had recently learned to scuba dive. A buoyancy compensatory is a device used for floating that expands around the center of the body. The part that the reporters didn't realize was that just as I was going to sleep, Stephen had whispered to me that maybe I could solve the ancient Zen koan of "the sound of one hand clapping." I believe that the reason my subconscious couldn't get my hands to clap was because then I wouldn't be making the sound of "one" hand clapping.

During another lab experiment, my eye movements were being monitored, as usual. In a lucid dream, before I moved my eyes, I explained what I was going to do to the dream

character that represented my friend Tim. He said, "Oh, you mean you move your eyes back and forth like this?" He then moved his eyes in this manner. After I signaled and woke up, we noticed that there were two eye signals recorded. Tim's eyes moving in the dream must have affected my physical eyes. This made me wonder if all dream characters are really aspects of the dreamer as well.

Robert: It seems that the lucid dream research focused mostly on physiological correlations between dream experience and waking experience, rather than, say, the psychological meaning of dream characters, etc. Is that the case?

Beverly: We did many more experiments in the lab through the years. I tried estimating time in a dream and while wake. The estimates turned out to be very similar. We believed that time sometimes seems different in dreams because dreams often work the way movies do. When scenes end in movies, often new activity from a later period begins immediately. In other experiments, I followed patterns with my dream eyes. For example, in a dream, I would watch my finger make an infinity sign about two feet wide in front of my face, and we'd compare it to my physical eyes following this same pattern while awake. Oddly enough, I would often do these experiments after working all day on my Ph.D., and performing all evening with my professional belly dance troupe. Talk about working 24 hours a day!

In another ground-breaking experiment, I was in the Stanford Sleep Lab, hooked up to electrodes and vaginal probes. My goal was to have sex in a dream and experience an orgasm. I dreamed that I flew across Stanford campus and saw a group of tourists walking down below. I swooped down and tapped one dream guy, wearing a blue suit, on the shoulder. He responded right there on the walkway. We make love, and I signaled the onset of sex, the orgasm, and when I was about to wake up. We later published this experiment in the ***Journal of Psychophysiology*** as the first recorded female orgasm in a dream.

Robert: Did dream lab work affect your normal lucid dreaming?

Beverly: During this time period, while at home in my bedroom, I found myself in a dream. Dream scientists asked me to go to sleep in a chair. They wanted to study me. By falling asleep in a dream chair, I actually woke up, and I wrote down the dream. I went back to sleep, and I found myself in the same dream chair with the dream scientists. I asked them what they observed while they saw me sleeping, while I had actually woke up and recorded the dream. They said I was almost paralyzed, except that my eyes were moving quickly back and forth, left and right. Was my waking life a dream to these dream scientists? I began to use the process of falling asleep in a dream as a way to wake up.

Robert: So what about your lucid dreams in the lab? Were they affected by the laboratory setting?

Beverly: In the laboratory, I learned to wait until early morning hours to even try to have a lucid dream. After eight hours of sleep, it would be easier for me to become lucid. We found this to be true for most people. For example, I would say, "I will do the experiment at 7:30 a.m." I picked this time because it was before the office personnel would come in and begin to make noises.

Picking a time, also made it easier for the media people. Instead of watching my brain waves all night, they could rest, and know exactly when to watch me perform live. I normally woke up after most REM periods, about every hour and a half. When I would wake up between six and seven a.m., I would then focus on my lucid dreaming task. This process is how we came up with the technique called "MILD," or Mnemonic induction of lucid dreams.

In my laboratory dreams, I would often find myself in a lab setting, similar to the one in which I was sleeping. In my dreams, I would often joke with the dream characters who represented the lab technicians or the media people. Sometimes, I would fly over their heads for fun. I would always remember to signal at the point when I knew I was dreaming, and at the beginning and ending of any of my tasks.

Robert: Was it odd having news media attention about lucid dreaming?

Beverly: Once, I was asked to do a lucid dreaming experiment at the lab for the television show 20/20. While being hooked up to electrodes used to verify my sleeping brain waves, I sat next to Hugh Downs, the host of the show. I had known him from television since I was a child. He wanted to try his luck at becoming lucid in his dreams that night. I became lucid easily that night, finding myself in a bed that looked like the one in the lab where I had fallen asleep. I got the idea to head towards Oakland, and maybe make it to a scheduled Grateful Dead concert. I got half way there, when I remembered that I was being filmed for a national television show. One of my goals was to bring Hugh Downs flying. I turned around midair and quickly flew back to the Stanford Sleep Lab. I looked for what I thought would be the wall of Hugh's room. I nudged him on the side and said, "Hugh, wake up! I have come to take you flying." He seemed very sleepy, so I took his hand, and I gently pulled him out of bed. We got to the coliseum just as the Grateful Dead were playing on stage. Because we were like ghosts, it was easy to merely float right over the band, in fact, directly over the lead guitar player, Jerry Garcia's, head. We had the best location in the place, and the music sounded especially clear and vibrant. The next morning, I asked Hugh if he remembered any dreams. Unfortunately, he didn't, but he seemed very pleased when I told him mine. The reporters interviewed me, but as far as I know the segment was never shown.

Robert: Sexual desires seem fairly common in my lucid dreams and in most other lucid dreamers'. Was this the case in your experience as well?

Beverly: In my lucid dreams, I have had sex with dream characters who represent men, women, old people, young people, strangers, relatives, as well as people of various races and classes. I have been the woman, the man, half woman/half man, both split from

waist, and with both a penis and a vagina. I have been a man with a man, a woman with a woman, an old man with young girls, with groups and alone. I have made love physically with myself in all combinations. I can barely think of some sexual situation that I have not experienced. These dreams are all very enjoyable and everyone is always totally accepting.

I would sometimes give myself challenges while not in the lab, as well. In one very powerful lucid dream, I felt very sure of myself and decided to have sex with the next dream person who came down the street. I did so, right in the middle of the road, with no inhibitions. I gave myself a suggestion to remain lucid afterwards and it worked. However, I now found myself alone, in front of a campfire. I took this as another challenge and stepped right into the center of the roaring fire. I was having fun and decided to try eating the flames. Interestingly enough, they tasted salty. Next, I appeared with nothing physical around me, so I decided that I would fly up and merge with the sun. I sped upwards like superman, accelerating rapidly until, about half way there, I heard a great sound. It was very intense, and yet blissful. I felt extremely lucid for the next several days in both my waking and sleeping states.

Robert: Any final thoughts about experiments or experiences in the lab with Stephen LaBerge?

Beverly: During one lucid dreaming experiment at the lab, Stephen LaBerge asked me to try healing my stiff neck in a dream by rubbing my hands and directing the energy to my neck. I tried this in a dream, and I found sparks coming from my hands. The sparks set my hair on fire, and I spend the dream trying to put the fire out. Even I wasn't always completely lucid!

In another lab experiment for a television special, I had to sing the song, "Row, row, row your boat.... life is but a dream." The week that the show was to air, they used a clip of me singing this song with electrodes all over my face, wearing my blue robe, for a commercial. It was shown several times a day that week. A few times, when I turned on the television, the commercial was playing and I saw myself saying, "Life is but a dream!" It was a very strange experience indeed! I decided it must be some kind of message from the universe, and I better pay attention. I was formulating the ideas that would eventually become what I now call, "lucid living!"

Robert: Beverly, because you have so many great lucid dream experiences, we plan to continue this interview for the next LDE - and maybe even the one after that! Would you care to leave us with one of your favorite lucid dreams from this period?

Beverly: This next dream serves as a good description of how our thoughts can create reality. I was in a lucid dream and I met a lovely fairy teacher who told me that she would give me the gift of seeing my thoughts manifest instantly in front of me. I found myself driving on a road around a large lake. I thought how nice it would be to be in a boat on the water. Instantly, I was sitting in a boat looking up at the road I had just been on. I was amazed. I must have imagined being in town next. In front of me on a dusty road, I saw a

mysterious man walking towards me. He put his hand in his pocket. I thought, "What if he pulls a knife on me?" Sure enough, I noticed the blade. I was terrified, but just as quickly I tried to picture him merely scratching his leg. I was relieved when he did. Still, I was afraid that I would think more negative thoughts, and I wanted this all to stop. Yet, I didn't know how to do so. Finally, I decided to think of my bedroom and myself asleep. Sure enough, I woke up, and I felt that I had learned a great deal about how our mental states can affect our experiences.

Robert: So Beverly, you have been lucid dreaming regularly since you were a child, and helped Stephen LaBerge scientifically prove the existence of lucid dreaming as his main research subject. But did your time in lucid dreaming affect your other dreams, or were they everyday, normal dreams?

Beverly: In 1982, after becoming extremely proficient in lucid dreaming, I spontaneously began having precognitive dreams. These are dreams of things that happen later in the waking state. For me, these dreams usually had great detail, were very emotional, and the waking scenario would occur within a few days of the dream. However, my precognitive dreams usually have not been lucid. I was sure that they were not due merely to coincidence. I even described the events, in detail, to others, who were later present during the waking scenario. My previous view of the physical world as being "solid," and having precise rules, had turned upside down!

Robert: How did you respond to having your world view altered by your lucid and precognitive dreaming?

Beverly: These experiences caused me to explore other psychic phenomenon. I began reading books, such as Jane Robert's "Seth" work. I needed to make sense of what was happening to me. Again, I thought of life being a dream. It would explain how such things like precognitive dreams could occur. Maybe, I needed to become more lucid in life in order to really see it as a dream. My dreams often seemed as real as physical reality, sometimes more so. The more I thought of the implications of life being a dream, the more it made sense. We could all be dream characters in a dream we call life. Was there a Dreamer dreaming us all? However, during this time, I was still a scientist trying to finish my Ph.D. I did not want to be distracted by these ideas so much, that I never finished my degree. I decided to put them off for awhile.

Robert: That's understandable. So how did the dissertation go?

Beverly: In my waking state, I was having trouble writing my doctoral dissertation. I decided to try writing it in my dreams first. In one dream, I found myself lying in bed. The desk in the room was in the wrong place, so I realized that I was dreaming. I headed for my computer, to start writing. I found that I could not move. I was paralyzed. I told myself, "This is my dream, and I can do what I want!" I slowly made it to the desk. I looked down, and I saw that the chair seat was an opening for "the pit to hell." Flames swept up, and it sounded and smelled awful! I was, however, determined to succeed. Holding my breath, I sat down, ready to be sucked into the pit. Instead, I woke up, and

within a very short time, I finished writing my dissertation in the area of artificial intelligence.

Robert: That's a great story. I recall being at an Association for the Study of Dreams presentation, where one of the speakers admitted that his realistic dream of fighting the devil occurred when he was undergoing the oral and written defense of his doctoral dissertation! So what happened after you finished your dissertation?

Beverly: I finished my Ph.D. in 1983 and my career really took off! I was very involved in starting up businesses and traveling around the world. In 1987, I took a short break from this computer science work to help Stephen LaBerge form the Lucidity Institute.

By this time, we had been experimenting for awhile with lucid dreaming induction techniques to help others more easily become lucid in their dreams. At first, we tried to send clues to the dream world by using smells and sounds. In one experiment, I tape-recorded my own voice saying, "I am dreaming, now!" A technician would play the tape when I was in REM sleep, making it gradually louder. However, as soon as the sound became loud enough for me to hear in the dream, it would wake me up. This was when we decided to send light to the dream, instead. Light could be more easily incorporated into the dream and used as a clue to induce a lucid dream, for someone trained to look for the flashing light in their dream.

Robert: So, forgiving my pun, you and Stephen saw the light. How did that work?

Beverly: We developed a mask that people could wear to sleep at night, which could recognize REM eye movements. If a person was in REM sleep, it would then flash a light, which would get incorporated into the dream. If users were trained to look for the light, they could learn to question whether or not the light was from the mask, and, more importantly, question whether or not they were dreaming. The light might appear as flashing stoplights in street scenes, or as lightning flashing in the sky. Many versions of this dream mask eventually got developed, including the Dream Light™ and the Nova Dreamer™.

I created the first business plan to market this lucidity induction device. I also helped Stephen give lucid dreaming workshops. In 1990, I decided to lead my own personal groups and workshops on lucid dreaming, which soon became lucid dreaming/lucid living.

Robert: Interesting. When you started out on your own leading lucid dream workshops, did you feel like you had your own unique vision of lucid dreaming?

Beverly: Sharing a little of my introduction to lucid dreaming will clarify how I look at things. When we become "lucid" in our sleeping dreams, we become aware that we dream while we dream. Some people never remember their dreams, some remember them after they have been awake for a while, and some remember them just after or before they awaken. Lucid dreamers remember they dream while the dream takes place. They do not

necessarily analyze the dream, or look for symbols, but directly and consciously experience the dream, shortening the time it takes to realize they dream.

To me, lucid dreaming does not mean merely "visualizing", "daydreaming", "clear" dreaming, or even "controlled" dreaming, necessarily. Also, I personally believe in levels of lucidity, as a spectrum. I would say I am partially lucid, if I just remember to question if I am dreaming. I'd call myself definitely lucid, if I know I am dreaming for sure. I consider myself very lucid, if I can control or change things in the dream, not that I always do. Finally, when I am most lucid, I often do not experience a body, but I have a very powerful, spiritual-like experience.

In a lucid dream, I feel free to do whatever I please, have fun, experiment, solve problems, accomplish goals, and go wherever my imagination takes me, taking care to balance spontaneity and control. I have learned that sometimes it is better to surrender to the dream. Other times, it helps to take control, change things, or carry out goals.

I have remembered, on average, half a dozen dreams per night, for most of my life. I'd say that between 2 and 20 dreams per week were lucid, to various degrees. So, I'd say a good estimate of how many lucid dreams I have had would be 20,000. Unfortunately, I am not a very good recorder of dreams, nor I have organized my dream reports very well. I have, however, kept track of the ones I consider most valuable.

Robert: A thousand here, a thousand there - at that point, who's counting? No, that's incredible. So how have you used your lucid dreaming knowledge and skills in your presentations and workshops?

Beverly: Here are a few examples of how I worked with my students in my groups. I would often ask my students to choose a goal for a lucid dream. One student told me he'd like to bike around the world. I told him to start simple. He first had to become lucid, remember the task, stay in the dream, and find a bike to ride. He accomplished this in several months. Finally, one day he reported that he had ridden his bike through Russia in his dreams. Shortly after this, he told me that he could no longer attend my group. He was quitting his job, selling his house, and taking five years off to bike around the world!

Another time, a friend I had just met asked me to dream for him. I dreamed I was in a theater and was watching a movie that he is in. Later, I told him the story, and I discovered that I had dreamed his life, including things he never told anyone.

Once, I told a friend's eight year old nephew about lucid dreaming. I helped him practice lucid dream induction techniques while awake. I asked him what he'd like to do in a dream. He said he'd like to meet a president of the United States. In a few days, he called me to tell me that he had a lucid dream. He didn't find Washington or Lincoln, but he did meet up with the artist, Leonardo da Vinci. He said that it was okay, because da Vinci was famous too. I asked him what happened. He told me that he asked da Vinci if da Vinci knew that he was in the encyclopedia. Then he showed da Vinci some of his own artwork. The boy was very happy with his lucid dream, and very pleased with himself.

Robert: Did listening to your students' lucid experiences and challenges inspire you to try out new things in your own lucid dreams?

Beverly: Yes, sometimes I would decide ahead of time to meet up with people in my dreams. I have succeeded in dreaming of the people, but none have ever told me that they had the same dream. That would be called a "mutual dream." It is easier for me to attempt a mutual dream when I am lucid, because I can stop and remember my goal. I have an easier time making it happen, as well.

I often try to accomplish tasks for my students so we can discuss issues that arise, and also to see if we could have a mutual dream. Here is a dream I had when trying to have a mutual dream with a student named Sharon.

I found myself in front of my childhood home and noticed that it looked strange. The door wasn't in the right place and the house was situated improperly on the block. This happens often in my dreams, so at that moment I became lucid. I knew I was dreaming and I remembered that I had a goal for this dream. However, I saw a neighbor, who I knew had died, and I first stopped to talk to her. In previous dreams, I would see her and say, "You are dead!" and try to get on with my goal. She would get upset and say, "I'm here now, so talk to me!" Unless I did, I learned that I would have trouble completing my goal.

My goal for the dream was to meet Sharon in the Bahamas. Immediately, I began to fly like superman heading south, because I was in the Chicago area at the time. It was dark, and I had a long way to go. By this time in my lucid dreaming experience, I could fly through electric wires that were in my way, but now I had another idea. I could make myself miniature, go into the wire as electricity itself, and get there very quickly. So I got tiny and popped into the nearest wire, which appeared like a large tunnel once I was inside. I was whisked very fast, shooting headfirst down the line, until I abruptly popped out the end of the wire. As my normal self again, I was somewhere at the southern tip of the United States, at the ocean's edge, where the electric lines stopped.

I realized I didn't have much time left, and I decided to travel the rest of the way underwater, doing a kind of superman swim/flying. I soon got distracted by the lovely underwater life and the joy of moving so fast, while breathing the water. I finally made it to a lovely beach in the Bahamas. I asked a guy, who was serving drinks to the sunbathers, if there was a restaurant nearby. This was the place where Sharon and I agreed we would try to meet. He pointed down the beach, and I walked to a resort type building, and then through a long hall. I was about to ask the host if Sharon was waiting for me, when I saw "her" sitting on a bench. She didn't look like she was expecting me, so I said, "Don't you remember that you said you wanted to dream of going to the Bahamas, and I said I'd meet you in a lucid dream of my own? Well, this is it. We are dreaming now."

I was thinking that this dream girl was "Sharon," a dream-body who was connected to Sharon, who was probably asleep in bed in Mountain View, California. If I had seen her as a projection of myself, I may have decided not to talk to her, believing that she wasn't connected in any way to the physical Sharon. In this case, I said to her, "Well, I'll tell you a secret, and we'll see if you remember it when I see you in our group next week." I whispered a secret in her ear, and soon afterwards I woke up.

Robert: So what happened after this lucid dream? Did she call you in waking reality or have any memory of the dream?

Beverly: When Sharon came to my lucid dreaming group that Sunday night, she had forgotten the goal and had never dreamed of me, nor the Bahamas. I am still waiting, as I am with others, for her to report a related dream or for her to tell me the secret!

Around this time, I had a dream where I was riding my bike down the street of my childhood home. I became lucid and started flying into the air. I was flying over the nearby river, when a cartoon figure of a dolphin floated in front of me. The dolphin danced around, and then asked me if I'd like to go on an adventure. After putting out its fin for me to hold onto, it proceeded to pull me down into the ocean, which was now where the river had previously been. Something similar had happened to me, with a whale shark, in the waking state, while I was scuba diving. The dolphin and I traveled deeper and deeper, faster and faster. I felt both ecstatic and somewhat dizzy, almost as though the experience were too intense. I woke up, however, feeling fantastic; very peaceful, yet energized.

Robert: That's great. Did you have any more experiences with dolphins in dreams or waking life?

Beverly: A few years later, I noticed an ad from a man who took people on dolphin expeditions. I contacted him, and we eventually did a joint lucid dreaming/dolphin swimming workshop on a sailboat in the Bahamas. On this trip, while I was in the crystal clear water of the open sea, one of the dolphins rubbed up to me. Underwater, its color and shape looked remarkably similar to the dolphin of my dreams.

Robert: So what other lucid dreaming stories come to mind?

Beverly: When I was thirty-seven years old, I became very anxious to find a mate, get married, and have children. During the Christmas holidays, while visiting my parents, I had the following dream. I met up with myself at the age of twenty-one, who was sad because she was about to leave her college boyfriend, so she could travel and have a career. I told my twenty-one year old self that I had done those things. I said that I now wanted a husband and children. She introduced me to my alternative self, who was also 37, and who had married my college boyfriend. They had three children, and now she wanted to divorce him. My twenty-one year old self and I decided that everything was as it should be. Finally, I woke up. As I am writing down the dream, I hear an inner voice, as if from a future self, who says, "Everything is perfect as it is!" I finally believed it. I

trusted that I would find my perfect mate, when the time was right. I didn't need to worry about it. I decided that if life is a dream, then my dreams would come true. I imagined that anything was possible, even after I read a Newsweek article, which said that a woman was more likely to die from terrorists, than to get married after forty! I did, however, prepare my life for my future family by buying a house, getting a dog, which was supposed to be good with kids, and taking a job as a college teacher, which I thought would work well with being a mom. I met my husband two years after this dream.

Robert: It's interesting in that story how your conversation in the lucid dream leads to a strong conviction that "Everything is perfect as it is!" and following that revelation, you move ahead and buy a house and prepare for your future family. That is one thing that many casual lucid dreamers fail to see - how a lucid dream experience can be as powerful or more powerful than many significant waking experiences. Have you ever used waking reality to practice becoming lucid?

Beverly: In my groups, we would practice becoming lucid while awake. I would give my students exercises, such as, questioning if they are dreaming, several times a day. For example, I asked them to check if they were dreaming every time they washed their hands during the day. I jokingly said, "If your hand falls off, you are most definitely in a dream!" Around this time, I was also helping my mother with her dreams of my dad after he died, in 1992. She was having recurring dreams of my dad, who would appear next to her bed. She would fear that he was here to take her to heaven. I told my mom, "If you see dad, remember that he died, and therefore you must be dreaming!" A few days after I gave my group the hand exercise, she was able to get lucid in her recurring dream. My mother remembered that my father had died, and she knew she was dreaming. She was even able to take his hand, and his hand fell off. She did not know about the exercise when she reported the dream to me the next morning.

Robert: Beautiful. Did trying to become lucid while awake lead to any revelations?

Beverly: Yes, I saw how powerful it could be to become lucid in waking life. I met my husband, Chris, six months after my father died. It was the most lucid day I have ever experienced. We were at a party, and I saw him from across the room. I knew that he was my future. It was love at first sight. I was able to stay in the moment, without fear, and with total trust. I believed in magic, while been totally accepting whatever happened. I was able to listen to him, as if he were truly part of myself.

I was very sorry, however, that he never got to meet my father, when I had the next dream. I was in my childhood home, where my mom still lived, and I saw my dad on the couch. I remembered that he died, and that I must be dreaming. I went to sit next to him and told him that I loved him. I asked him why, lately, he hadn't appeared as often in my dreams. He said that he was helping me from under the bridge. I'm not sure what he meant, but I was happy to hear his voice and feel him close. Next, I embraced him, and after we hugged, I looked back into his eyes. He had turned into my husband, whom I so much wanted my dad to meet. I soon awakened and felt as though they had finally met, at some level.

Chris and I were married in less than a year after we met. We knew that we wanted to have a child. After much medical help to get pregnant, I decided to work on the issue in my dreams.

I decided to dream of our future baby. I would ask questions of the baby in the dream such as, "When are you coming?" I would also try to determine what year it was in the dream. Sometimes the baby would have messages.

Robert: It's fascinating how you seem to work on "the future" to some degree in your lucid dreams. Maybe it is not the future, so much as your hopes for the future. Did you have many other lucid dreams of trying to influence the future?

Beverly: One time, in waking reality, I was back in my childhood home, alone for the first time. My mom was ill, and in the hospital. My Dad had died over two years ago. I was afraid, crying in my bed. I fell asleep. Spontaneously, without trying to influence the future, I had a type of nurturing dream involving the future. I became lucid in my dream, when I noticed that the baby, from my baby picture on the wall, was coming out of the picture. I walked over to myself as a baby,

just in time to take the baby in my arms. As I held her, I saw my face in hers, and I pulled her to my chest. I could see her lips sucking at my breast, and I felt very fulfilled. I slowly awakened, and I felt my own lips moving, as well. I was deeply nurtured. A year later I nursed my own child in that very bed!

Before my son, Adrian, was born, however, I also had some interactions with my childhood witches. My witch dreams went through many transformations during my life. In 1960, I faced up to the scary witches from my recurring nightmares. In the 1970's, I looked for the witches of my childhood in a dream, and they appeared as harmless, little old ladies. In the 1980's, I noticed that the witch drama appeared in my waking life as well. In 1994, doctors gave me terrible odds against having a child. So, I looked for the witches in a lucid dream, thinking of them as my "creative power," and I brought them into my uterus. Within a year, I got pregnant with my son, Adrian.

Adrian was born during the 1995 Association for the Study of Dreams Conference (ASD95). This was three years after I presented the paper at ASD92 called, "What I Learned from Lucid Dreaming is Lucid Living." I brought him to the ASD96 conference. He also came to the ASD97 conference, where I gave a workshop called, "Living Life as a Lucid Dream." Adrian turned two on the day of the dream ball.

Robert: In a way, it seems that your lucid dreaming skills allowed you to use that beautiful symbol of witches as creative power for your own ends. In a sense, you claimed the power of the shadow.

Robert: How did your lucid dreaming develop after the birth of your son?

Beverly: My mom was feeling better during the years after my son Adrian was born. She visited us often, and we would go to Chicago to see her, as well. Adrian and she became best friends. In the year 2000, I had the biggest challenge of my life. Adrian had started kindergarten. I talked to my mom on the phone almost every day. She was still living in my childhood home, near Chicago. Six days before her planned trip to visit us in California for the holidays, she drove a friend to lunch. That night she told her neighbor that she was feeling good. I had a dream that night, which I shared with Chris and Adrian during breakfast. In the dream, I went to help a woman I loved, who was hanging on her house by her fingertips. Soon, I was hanging by my fingertips, as well. Chris told us that he dreamed we were going on a trip, and I was quickly getting ready.

That morning, in Chicago, my mother didn't answer her door, so her neighbor came in. She found my mom on the floor, next to her bed, unconscious. The doctors called me to say that my mom had had a sudden, massive stroke, and all four quadrants of her brain were instantly destroyed. She would only exist in a vegetative state. I needed to take her off life-support, as she requested in her living will. Chris, Adrian, and I flew to Chicago immediately. Needless to say, the next twelve days before Christmas were a very difficult and emotional time.

Robert: I remember the year before my father passed away, I had a number of lucid and apparently precognitive dreams giving me information - but on one level, nothing can prepare you for it. How did you deal with this?

Beverly: First, I needed to give the okay to remove her ventilator. Everyone thought that she would die at this point. The night before this was scheduled, I had a dream that my husband and I were at the edge of the beach. A tidal wave was coming. In the distance, we saw angels flying toward us in a "V" formation. We thought the tidal wave would demolish us, but instead, the angels flew right over our heads and protected us. This dream told me that I would be able to survive this ordeal. Coincidentally, the ventilator was removed at the exact time that her plane to California was scheduled to take off. However, she still lived, and we had more decisions to make. Do we give her an IV? Is glucose considered food? We did not want to prolong her life in this state. One time, I stayed up all night with her in the hospital. When I finally did go to bed, I had a dream of her. She said to me, "Get some sleep, I'll take care of the body."

Finally, it was Christmas Eve. My mom and I had been together almost every year of my life at midnight Mass on Christmas Eve, in my hometown church. Christmas Eve was her favorite day of the year. She always said, "If we are ever lost, let's meet on this night at our church, in our regular seats". My mother died right at midnight, officially Christmas Day morning.

After her funeral, I stayed alone in my childhood home for another few weeks, to go through fifty years of stuff that had been collected. I made the decision to rent out the house.

Robert: That must have been an extremely difficult and emotional time. Did dreaming help, or was that painful too?

Beverly: My life, as well as my dreams, was quite a struggle after this. In my dreams, I hated to see my mom, only to remember that she had died, which would happen when I was lucid. This was too much to handle. I didn't want to be reminded, once again, in the sleep state, that my mother had died. It was enough to deal with it while awake. I decided not to have lucid dreams for a while. I had a strong intent and a physical need for this to happen. I did have regular, non-lucid dreams of her.

At each stage of my grief, these non-lucid dreams of my mother evolved. First, I dreamed of her and I doing our usual activities. I could have enjoyed these dreams, if I didn't have to feel such shock when I woke up and remembered that she had indeed died. Next, I started dreaming that my mother did not die after all. Then, I had dreams in which she had died, but mysteriously came back to life. I didn't question this in the dreams.

I had many dreams of my childhood home during this time, as well. I did not get lucid, even with great clues, such as when house was changed in impossible ways. Things were very bizarre. Other people were living there, as was now the case with the renters, in reality. I felt angry and confused.

I went to grief therapy for over a year. Using peer counseling and group sharing, I demonstrated more and more acceptance of my mother's death. Little by little, I took the knowledge of her death into my dreams and began to explain it to other dream characters. Finally, after explaining my mother's death to my "father" in a dream, I was able to interact with my "mother," and actually discuss her death. At this point, I had a significant degree of lucidity, and my dreams felt more comfortable, and sometimes enlightening.

Robert: I recall that a month after my father's death, I became lucid and insisted on seeing my father. Amazingly, the dream characters told me that "no, it is too soon". So instead, I had a fascinating conversation with them. After that my dream characters in lucid dreams were quite supportive and caring, and I did go on to have lucid conversations with my deceased father. How did your lucid dreaming progress?

Beverly: In the spring of the year 2002, a year and a half after my mother's death, the lease was up on my childhood home. I needed to sell the house. But could I? Spontaneously, I dreamed that I found the witches in my childhood home. I surrendered to them, and they pulled me under the closet door, where they came from. I merged with the witches. The biggest fears of my childhood were resolved. In my dreams, my fear was to go with the witches. In life, my fear was my mother's death. At last, I could sell the house easily, and I felt that I had healed quite a bit. In the last dream I had of my childhood home, I flew out the picture window like a powerful witch.

After this, I would bring my mother into my dreams. We would embrace and I'd say, "I love you and I miss you, mom." Sometimes, in my dreams, I am still convincing her that she really died. This tells me that some level of grief still exists. One time, in a dream, I said to my mom, "You are safe now, you are in heaven!" I heard the message for myself, as I see my mother as part of my higher self, the Dreamer of life. I presented my grief dreams in a paper at ASD2003 called, "Witches, the House, and Grief: Developing and Avoiding Lucid Dreaming." I was now in a place to get on with discussing my work on "lucid living!"

Robert: Yes, please tell us about lucid living.

Beverly: Before I discuss lucid living, I need to define a few more terms. When discussing a non-lucid dream while awake, I refer to my dream self as "me" or "I," (as in: "I was flying") and I refer to my physical self (or part of my physical self's "mind") as the one who creates the dream, whom I call the dreamer. By definition then, I can not call my dream self the dreamer, although I recognize that some people do. Note, that I do not feel my physical self's brain contains my physical self's mind. I also assume that a "mind" is not physical. In a lucid dream, although I also refer to my dream self as "I", I can sense my connection to the dreamer, and I feel like a "larger, expanded self." Sometimes I even feel connected to what I'll later describe as the "Dreamer of life."

Robert: So in a regular dream, you consider the dream creator as apart from the dream actor. But in a lucid dream, you are aware that the dream creator is also a portion of the dream actor, and in that sense, the awareness is expanded. Right?

Beverly: Yes, but I'd clarify that in a regular, non-lucid dream, from the "perspective" of the dream actor, the dream creator seems to be separate or actually never even considered.

Although I usually say that my dream exists in my physical self's mind, it usually feels as though my dream self, whom you have called the dream actor, and my physical self exist in separate dimensions, and when I "wake up", I change dimensions (or perspectives.) Most importantly, when I become lucid, I feel that my thoughts definitely do not come from my dream self's mind or brain, but from my physical self's mind. For example, my dream self will often have a different life, history, motivations, and goals than my physical self.

So, to summarize, in a lucid dream I usually experience myself in a 3-dimensional, vivid world that I believe my physical self's mind has created. Therefore, I feel safe because I feel I exist in my physical self's mind and not in physical reality (where my physical body resides). Because I see the dream as being created by my physical self's mind, I also know that anything I (the dreamer) can imagine can happen. By believing that everyone and everything around me in the dream, including my dream self and other dream characters, exists in my physical self's mind, I experience everyone as "one", or "made of the same substance" and all "parts of a whole."

Robert: Okay, I think I am following you. How does this relate to lucid living?

Beverly: When I view my waking life as a dream, a dream in which I know I am dreaming (to various degrees, of course), I call this lucid living. Waking life may feel 'real' and unlike a 'dream,' merely because I lack lucidity, just as non-lucid dreams can feel like physical reality, until I become lucid. I try to view life as an "actual dream" and not to merely use lucid living as a therapy or philosophy. The assumptions that come from viewing life as a dream can be very powerful and can expand what we feel is possible in life.

If I look at waking life as a dream, then I can also use lucid dreaming techniques that I learned from my sleeping dream experiences, to more easily become lucid in my waking life. When lucid in waking life, I can become more "free", have fun, accomplish goals, feel connected, and maybe even experience magic in my waking life, as I have in my sleeping lucid dreams.

Robert: So you try to transpose the lessons and experiences of achieving results in lucid dreaming, to the world of waking reality. In so doing, you have used this knowledge and perception to support your experience of lucid living.

Beverly: In lucid living, I think of our physical selves as dream selves in a dream called "waking life." I also imagine a Dreamer who is dreaming our lives. Note the capital "D" to distinguish from the use of dreamer as part of a physical self's mind. Sometimes, I view this Dreamer as some "Being" asleep in a bed in another dimension. Other times, I view the Dreamer as a nonphysical "God" or an all-encompassing, collective "Mind." I guess there could be levels of Dreamers as well.

Either way, when I am lucid in waking life, I sense a connection to this Dreamer, whom I sometimes call my Higher-Self. I begin to respond to things from the perspective of this Dreamer. As in a lucid sleeping dream, I feel "safe," I believe in "limitless possibilities", and I see everyone in waking life as "one" or "parts of a whole."

Robert: So how do you suggest one go about achieving this state, and living waking life lucidly?

Beverly: Throughout my life, I have developed techniques for becoming lucid in my sleeping dreams, and I have found there are many uses for lucid dreaming. Some of these uses include: psychological development, trying new behaviors, healing, and more. I've found that all of my techniques, below, can apply, whether we find ourselves asleep or awake, i.e., in sleeping dreams or in waking life.

To become lucid in my sleeping dreams, or in my waking life, I often look for unusual or impossible situations. In my sleeping dreams, I will often see someone who has died and that will clue me that I am dreaming. At times, in my waking life, especially during tense situations, I look for the unusual and wonder if I am dreaming. Without knowing for sure, I begin to find more evidence, my reactions turn powerful, and I began to relax.

Robert: In other words, you use odd actions or events as a notice to step back from the event and become more broadly aware, just as we all do in lucid dreams. This is opposed to regular dreams or regular waking life, where, unaware, we let ourselves get more drawn into the odd or fearful event. In lucid living, you act like your lucid dreaming self, right?

Beverly: Yes, sometimes I "act as if," or pretend I am dreaming. I often ask myself, or others, if I am dreaming. I also make sure to "test" if I am dreaming. An example of a test is when I try to float. If I do float, I know I am dreaming for sure, and I become lucid. I have not floated in my waking life, but I do not rule it out as an impossibility. I have become more open, for example, to stories of yogis levitating.

Another valuable technique is to review recurring dreams and nightmares and practice imagining myself having new reactions. I have learned to modify my reaction to a monster in a recurring sleep-state nightmare. I have also changed my response to friends at key times in waking life. The key involves viewing the monster as part of my physical self's mind, in the case of the nightmare. In the waking life situation, I view my friends as part of my Higher-Self, or the Dreamer of life.

When trying to become lucid in my sleeping dreams, and in my waking life, I find it valuable to get myself motivated. For example, I can teach or take a class on lucid dreaming or lucid living. It helps to record, share, and visualize my sleeping dreams and my waking life situations. I especially like to do exercises to help me become lucid in both sleeping dreams, and in waking life.

Robert: Could you tell us about a possible exercise to become more lucid in either state?

Beverly: Here is an example of an exercise. I stop and I ask myself if I could be dreaming several times a day, perhaps every time I wash my hands, or climb down steps, or do some activity that doesn't happen too often or too seldom. What I practice while awake, I eventually find myself doing in my sleeping dreams, so this technique helps me become lucid both in my waking and sleeping states.

One of the most valuable tools I have used for motivating me to become lucid in sleeping dreams involves setting goals. Sometimes, I become lucid and decide not to change the direction of my dream, in order to carry out a goal. In this case, I go with the flow of the dream. However, when I do have an interesting goal, I get motivated to become and remain lucid. In my lucid dreaming classes, I suggest that my students start with a simple goal to accomplish in their lucid dream. I ask them to decide the first steps that they can accomplish from wherever they might find themselves, and I tell them to decide this ahead of time, while awake. I find that a goal of "becoming lucid" does not work as well as a goal of doing something fun in the limitless world of dreams. This applies to waking life as well.

As a sleeping lucid dreamer, I learned to remain in my dreams, to wake up out of them, to change them, to go back into them, to become more lucid, and to accomplish intricate goals within them. I would like to do this in my waking state as well.

Robert: Well that sounds like something anyone could try. But what about lucid living?

Beverly: There are aspects of lucid dreaming that apply to lucid living and can help us live our lives more fully. In waking life, we may identify our physical bodies with our selves. The same thought occurs in non-lucid dreams, where we identify our dream bodies with our selves. We may believe that if our dream body dies, we die. We feel this way because we are not aware of our physical self in non-lucid dreams. We continue to feel this way until we wake up out of the dream and discover that the dream happened in our "mind" and not in "reality". We think, after the fact that we could have responded differently had we realized that we'd dreamed.
Of course, even in sleeping lucid dreams, we might not, for example, jump off a cliff, if we didn't feel positive that we were dreaming, and that we could, for example, merely fly away. We might just continue to dream that we had a very bad accident.

In general, after waking up from dreams, we don't think that our dream bodies have 'died,' but understand that we have merely switched focus.
Will we someday wake up out of our lives and merely change focus as well?

Our goal, then, in lucid living, involves learning to respond differently, at times, and with less fear in our waking lives. We do not need to wait until 'after the fact' to realize that we could have responded more fully and with more freedom in our lives. Instead, we can 'wake up within our waking life!'

Robert: It's interesting in lucid dreaming, and perhaps this goes for lucid living as well, that a broader awareness leads to the realization of a new type of relationship with the so-called reality around you. In turn, the aware person begins to act in that so-called reality in a new way. In lucid living, are one's actions different?

Beverly: Yes. For example, lucid dreamers have experienced the amazing feeling of having an exciting goal for a dream and making it happen. We can experience the joy of making things happen more often in our waking state, by learning to become lucid in waking life and set upon accomplishing tasks with a new outlook that anything is possible. At the very least, we can probably gain an understanding of how we may block our selves and try again, knowing we have endless possibilities.

An example, from an early stage of my sleeping lucid dream development, illustrates this point. In my dream, I could not fly to my destination because I kept hitting telephone poles. When I decided that "this is my dream," I was able to fly right through the poles. I also realized that it was my physical self's mind that created the telephone poles to begin with!

When we increase our lucidity in waking life, we can also feel a sense of oneness with everyone and everything. We can live as if our Higher-Self does indeed "create our own reality." We can experience an altered state of consciousness, and at the extreme, we can have what one might call "mystical experiences."

Robert: Okay, but even in some of our lucid dreams, we become frustrated - we can't fly very well, or the dream characters won't do what we want them to do. What about those cases?

Beverly: In lucid dreams, I try to remember that all the dream characters make up parts of my dreamer's mind. Similarly, the next time we find ourselves in an undesirable situation in our waking life, we can take action with the belief that other people make up parts of our Higher-Self, the Dreamer.
This can help us to stop and listen to what others have to say, not because we have been taught to, but because we want to understand the Dreamer. Like puppets who act as though they are separate and disconnected, we often feel disconnected. Using the puppet analogy, we can begin to identify more with the puppeteer, realizing that it is the puppeteer who makes everything happen.

Robert: Well, I'm not too happy with the word, "puppet", but I do get the point that the creator of the dream/waking reality is also involved, consciously or not, with the creations in that dream/waking reality. So there is a connection there, if we are lucid enough to wake up to it. Do you have examples of lucid living that would demonstrate your point?

Beverly: Remember, the true puppet has no more or less powers than the puppeteer. In essence they are "one and the same!"

Here are a few examples of how I have become lucid in my waking life. Once, during an argument with my cousin in the waking state, I suddenly stopped to think, "If I look at this as a dream right now, then my cousin actually expresses a part of the Dreamer (my Higher-Self.) At that exact moment, I acted from the perspective of the Dreamer, and she actually started to explain how our points of view seemed related instead of opposed.

Another time, a friend, in the waking state, was yelling and hovering over me like the witches from my sleeping dreams. I noticed the similarities to the witch nightmares, and I saw this as a pattern in my life. The situation actually happened in the same physical place in my house with different people. I faced up to my friend like I faced up to the witches, without fear, but with acceptance, and my friend suddenly stopped, walked away, and the pattern in my life ended, in the same way my witch nightmares ceased.

My marriage, my child, my degrees, my career, and my amazing adventures, too numerous to mention, are all examples of how lucid living has assisted me in having such an incredible and diverse life.

Robert: For many of us longtime lucid dreamers, we have similar stories. But do you think these ideas can be accepted by someone new to lucid dreaming?

Beverly: In my experience as a lucid dreaming teacher, my students found it easier to become lucid in their sleeping dreams, once they understood the concept and believed it possible. When they began to question whether or not they dreamed and looked for evidence, they often noticed something unusual and became lucid. Once they had experienced results, they no longer had to believe, they knew they could become lucid. We can do the same with lucid living.

Perhaps people would accept psychic phenomena, or synchronicities in waking life, more readily if they viewed waking life as a dream. Viewing life as a dream, gave me a foundation for understanding how I could possibly have had my first amazing, precognitive dreams. Psychic phenomena could also serve as clues for becoming lucid in waking life.

Robert: You know, I have often thought that in life, we simply live our assumptions. In lucid dreams, you begin to see that idea in an immediate sense. When you change your expectations in a lucid dream, the dream changes to accommodate the changes. It seems the same thing happens in waking life.

Beverly: Yes, I believe lucid living can have a profound effect on all our lives. Of course, as in our sleeping dreams, we can easily go on automatic and lose lucidity. However, the more we practice lucid dreaming skills, whether when asleep or during our waking life, the more likely we will become lucid at all times. By practicing lucid living, we strive to live the most illuminating, clear, and conscious waking life as possible.

We can also obtain a greater understanding of what spiritual practices, great writers, movies, fairy tales, and songs have been telling us for ages:

Hindu Maya: Waking life is an illusion;
Buddhist: Philosophy of Connectedness;
Christianity: Resurrection after death;
The Course of Miracles: Live the Happy Dream;
The Wizard of Oz: There's no place like home;
Shakespeare: All the world's a stage;
Star Trek: Holodeck;
The Matrix: The world has been pulled over your eyes to blind you to the truth.

The list goes on and on. My favorite is: Row, Row, Row, your boat, gently down the stream, merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily, life is but a dream.

Robert: Beverly, thanks for your sage advice and insights. Life is but a dream.